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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 001333

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NSC FOR AFRICA SENIOR ADVISER JENDAYII FRAZER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)

SUBJECT: SIMBA MAKONI ON ZIMBABWEAN CRISIS

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY JOSEPH G. SULLIVAN FOR REASONS 1.5b/d

1. (C) Former Finance Minister and still ZANU-PF Politburo member Simba Makoni called on the Ambassador July 1. Makoni, who recently lost his 23-year old son to suicide, told the Ambassador July 1 that he was focused on family and his growing consultancy business and relatively disconnected from politics these days. Makoni, who has relatively little political power, is rumored likely to lose his politburo seat soon. He is mentioned as a potential presidential candidate, most often as the candidate of ZANU-PF heavyweight Solomon Mujuru to stop the presidential candidacy of Emmerson Mnangagwa. Makoni said that President Mugabe's recent public statement calling for an open and above-board campaign for presidential succession had stimulated more open discussion of succession in the party.

2.(C) Makoni acknowledged that another factor was slowing down resolution of Zimbabwe's crisis. The fact that no clear succession path exists in ZANU-PF has tended to slow any actual progress toward transition. Makoni said that this absence of a solution often makes it seem like the GOZ leadership feels no urgency at all to deal with the country's crisis. Makoni believed that the South Africans and other Africans were in the best position to deliver a solution in Zimbabwe. But he compared the efforts of President Mbeki seeking to find a solution with Mugabe to that which he often faced as Finance Minister in dealing with President Mugabe on economic issues. The President would say: "yes, yes, yes" as they discussed a possible solution, but then never act to implement what they had discussed. Makoni said it was as if the economic and political crises were beyond the Zimbabwean leadership's ability to solve or even confront. Nonetheless, Makoni thought that African leaders were in the best position to advance and help deliver a resolution. He added that Secretary Powell's mention (in his "OP-Ed") of US and other

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donor assistance to a transitional Zimbabwean Government was positive.

3.(C) Makoni was aware of the debate over how effective a coalition transitional government could be prior to new elections. He hoped that it could be effective in laying out the path to realistic and pragmatic economic and political solutions. He also believed that in addressing the damage of the land redistribution exercise, a transitional government might be better positioned than an elected ZANU-PF or MDC government to set a new direction. Makoni believed that the existing land review commission headed by former Cabinet Secretary Charles Utete would do a good and respectable job

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of assessing problems in the land redistribution exercise, but had no ability to implement the necessary corrections. Nor did Makoni believe that the current Mugabe Government had the political will to implement tough recommendations. Makoni said: "One more Commission report to sit on the shelf."

4. Comment: Makoni has little political weight of his own and is not in position to advance his own political ambitions. If his name emerges as a serious candidate, it will be because others like Mujuru push him forward.
SULLIVAN